

Certification: Why You Should Care
By Judith Hale, Ph.D. CPT

There are a number of reasons why you should care about ISPI's certification, the Certified Performance Technologist. To me the most significant reason is that it lays the foundation to our being recognized as a profession. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Department of Labor, there are five characteristics of a profession. A profession has:

1. An organization that can speak as a unified voice for its members and foster the development of the field. ISPI and its chapters represent over 10,000 practitioners worldwide. The Society promotes education and development through its publications, institutes, and conferences.
2. A code of ethics that identifies standards of behavior relating to fairness, justice, truthfulness, and social responsibility. ISPI has a code of ethics based on the principles of add value, validated practice, collaboration, continuous improvement, integrity, and confidentiality.
3. Applied research related to the field. ISPI funds and publishes research on a regular basis.
4. A defined body of knowledge. ISPI, through its standards, has defined what each of us should know and be able to do.
5. A credential based on professional standards. ISPI credential, the Certified Performance Technologist, is based on demonstrated proficiency in the standards in ways that are in keeping with the code of ethics.

ISPI's developed the certification to:

1. Promote performance technology standards worldwide.

2. Provide clients, consumers, and employers with criteria to judge products and professional services.
3. Provide practitioners with criteria to judge their work and direct their professional development.

Here are a few of the more frequently asked questions.

1. I don't do all of the interventions. Do I qualify for the certification?

People will be certified because they demonstrate the standards, not because they are proficient in a smorgasbord of interventions. A person can be certified if they only concentrate in one or more of the families of interventions, like the design of instruction, job, processes, job aids and performance support tools, feedback systems, etc.

2. Do I have to take a test?

The certification is performance-based, not test or education based. This means people can be certified because their work and how they do it satisfies the standards, not because they can pass a test or completed a training or education program.

3. Who will recognize ISPI's certification?

ISPI's incorporated the standards for certifications published by the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA), the National Skills Standards Board (NSSB), the International Standards Organization (ISO), and the National Alliance of Business. The goal is for ISPI's credential to be accredited or recognized by these groups. Also, the people who helped build it represented employers, academics, vendors, and practitioners. They all support the standards.

You can learn more and ask your own questions at certification@ispi.org or check www.certifiedpt.org.

About the Author

Judith Hale was the first recipient of ISPI's new certification, the CPT. She is the author of *Performance-Based Evaluation* (2002), *Performance-Based Certification* (2000), *Performance Consultant's Fieldbook* (1998), *Workbook and Job Aids for Designing Tests* (1996), *Standards for the Training Function* (1995), *The Training Manager's Competencies* (1989), and co-author of *Achieving a Leadership Role for Training* (1995). Judith has been a consultant to management for over 27 years. She specializes in assessment and performance analysis. Judith was awarded a B.A. from Ohio State University, a M.A. from Miami University, and a Ph.D. from Purdue University.